NOVA SCOTIA

Department of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations

2004/ 2005
Business Plan

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Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations

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Message from the Minister and Deputy Minister

In 2004/05, the Province will concentrate on improving the health, education and prosperity of Nova Scotians, and every department will play a role in this endeavour.

Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations has worked together with our federal and municipal partners to invest more than $166 million for 111 projects that will improve the health, vibrancy and prosperity of communities. In the coming year, we will see the focus shift to further discussions and development of this program.

Recently, Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations examined ups and downs of the volatile fuel market. We are currently working to help consumers understand the factors that affect the cost of gasoline, diesel and home heating fuels, and to bring your concerns forward to the petroleum industry.

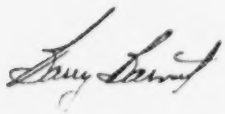
We will continue to work with mayors, wardens and municipal councils in the months ahead to develop a long-term solution to dramatically increasing property assessments. Already, the Province has made a proposal that would protect low and fixed income landowners. Similarly, we are in discussions with the municipalities and other stakeholders regarding abolishing the Business Occupancy Assessment Tax.

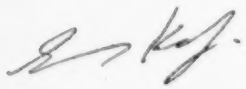
By March 2004, there were eight counties proclaimed under the *Land Registration Act* and the entire province will come under the *Act* in 2005. This will have a positive impact on land owners. For the first time, Nova Scotians will have guarantee of title, and a faster, more efficient means of handling property transactions.

Not all of our projects are on such a grand scale but they are no less significant. With legislation offering better protection for Internet shoppers now in effect, we are in discussions with the motor vehicle industry to establish better consumer safeguards for buyers and more consumer protection training for salespeople. As well, we continue to improve our security around identification documents, which will reduce the occurrence of identity theft. Nova Scotia's security precautions already meet or exceed national standards, but we must keep up with new threats as they evolve.

Our department will continue to deliver award-winning, excellent programs and services and will keep an eye on our future as we find new ways to work more efficiently and effectively. To serve you better.

In closing, an important note: On October 16th, Nova Scotians will have the opportunity to elect the men and women who will serve as their mayors, wardens and councillors for the next four years. Every eligible voter is urged to exercise this fundamental democratic right, to make their voice heard on key municipal issues.





Honourable Barry Barnet
Minister

Greg Keefe, CMA
Acting Deputy Minister

Introduction to the Department of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations

Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations

Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations was formed on October 1, 2000 to be the lead service delivery arm of government for programs and services to businesses, individuals and municipalities. The Department is organized on a functional basis to facilitate the evolution in service delivery in a manner that will result in seamless delivery to customers in the most efficient manner possible.

Mandate

When SNSMR was created in 2000, it was mandated to become the single window service provider for government's non-social services; provide quality service delivery with convenient access; reduce the amount of red tape on businesses and individuals through process streamlining; and, provide municipalities with a single access point to the Provincial Government.

This mandate requires the Department to make extensive investment in technology and process re-engineering to ensure its systems meet or exceed government and client expectations. In many service areas the Department has made significant advances in streamlining processes and efficiently improving customer service. Experience has proven that with careful planning, appropriate development time and the employment of technology, the Department can simultaneously achieve more effective and efficient service delivery.

Most of the investment to date has been attained through resource re-allocation and internal efficiencies. This is consistent with comments by the Auditor General of Nova Scotia who indicated that Government must improve its use of existing resources. While these options are always constrained, the Department will continue to explore alternatives and support initiatives that promote its mandate and objectives.

Responsibilities

The Department is responsible for ensuring results in the following areas:

- Effective and efficient policy development, enforcement and program management in programs and services related to consumer protection, driver safety, taxation and business practices offered by the Department.
- Effective and efficient delivery of government programs and services to clients through in-person, phone, mail, and Internet service channels.
- The provision of local government related policy advice to government and quality advice, support, assistance and program delivery to Nova Scotia municipalities.
- The provision of a fair, equitable and defensible assessment roll.
- The provision of streamlined registration, licensing and permitting processes.
- Collaboration with internal and external partners to evaluate and improve the quality and

effectiveness of government services.

- Policy development for the Department in the area of data privacy, security and access and integrity of data holdings.
- Support Government's corporate strategy for e-government services and alternative program delivery.
- Customer and stakeholder satisfaction with SNSMR services.
- Quality performance and morale of staff.
- Effective and positive relationships with other levels of government, provincial departments and agencies and the private sector.
- The provision of geographic information and associated technologies to support decision making by all provincial departments.
- Effective and efficient management of the Department's resources (financial, human, information technology, information)

Most of these responsibilities will be fulfilled via ongoing operations, through the services and programs identified in the Department's core business areas. However, a select few of these responsibilities have been identified for added emphasis over the next several years and represent the Strategic Goals (see page 12) that the Department will strive to achieve over the foreseeable future.

Organization

Currently the Department is organized into five divisions:

- Program Management and Corporate Services
- Service Delivery
- Registry and Information Management Services
- Municipal Services
- Alternative Program Delivery.

These divisions are discussed in more detail under the Core Business Areas section.

Vision

Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations is a recognized and modeled service organization - our pro-active stance and value-added contributions are well understood both within the provincial government and externally by citizens and businesses across Nova Scotia. Our quality and cost performance set us apart from comparable providers. Citizens can obtain any non-social service at one of our accessible centers and our on-line presence is proven and comparable to peer agencies anywhere.

We've been a catalyst in fostering seamless access to all levels of government and in migrating from

paper to electronic services.

The public interest is core to our legislative mandate. Clients are confident that public records are safe, reliable and easy to access, and municipalities are pleased with our client-focused relationship. Staff recognize their Department as an employer of choice because we have a proven track record for developing people and providing the technology and other tools that support their ability to deliver quality service. Service is our business.

Mission

To provide Nova Scotians with seamless, easy access to numerous government services in a cost-effective manner while maintaining the interests of the public and municipalities.

Planning Context

Various factors must be considered before the Department formulates its medium term direction. First and foremost are the priorities of the Government. Then there are internal and external issues within the environment that the Department operates that must be considered and addressed in the plan. Each of these factors plays a role in molding the actions the Department will take over the medium term.

Support of Nova Scotia Government Goals

Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations plays a key role in the implementation of the goals and priorities of the Nova Scotia Government. All the programs and services offered by the Department contribute in one way or another to the priorities of the Government. The strategic goals identified by the Department must therefore support, promote, and be consistent with the priorities of the Government.

The Government has identified five priorities for the upcoming planning year. These priorities are:

- Health Care - better, faster health care and Healthier Nova Scotians
- Learning is succeeding
- Building greater prosperity
- Fiscal responsibility and accountability
- Protecting what Nova Scotians value
    - Seniors
    - Families and Nova Scotians in need
    - Environment
    - Cultural diversity
    - Consumer protection/insurance

- Safer communities/streets

Many of the programs and services offered by the Department support the business community by promoting a more level playing field for all current and potential new businesses. A prime focus for SNSMR activity is to streamline business interactions with government and to make it easier for businesses to operate in the province. Other requirements placed upon business are done to provide consumers with confidence that they are dealing with legitimate commercial operators. This ultimately will support the third Government priority by growing the economy and increasing the number of jobs so that all Nova Scotians can participate in the growth and become more self sufficient and prosperous.

The less time, effort and money that business has to spend on its regulatory obligations the more resources it has to invest, create jobs and seek out opportunities for growth. Efforts to reduce red tape therefore also support government's priority related to the economy, jobs and growth.

Concurrently, the Department provides numerous services directly to consumers to assist them in their dealings with the business sector. Better consumer awareness, for example, protects consumers from unscrupulous operators, provides wider consumer selection and informs consumers as to where they can purchase goods or services at the lowest possible price. These actions once again provide the consumer with a belief in a fair and balanced economic system and the confidence to make purchases from local or international suppliers.

A major component of the Department's operations are composed of back office transactions, never seen by the consuming public, that support the programs and services offered to businesses and consumers. The providers of these services are constantly exploring more convenient, easier and less expensive means by which the Department can deliver its services. Through improvements such as technical enhancements, they are contributing to lowering the cost of running the Department and to Government's priority for fiscal responsibility.

Initiatives undertaken in cooperation with municipalities will make Nova Scotia communities more healthy and vibrant. Provincial funding for municipal infrastructure such as sewage and water systems will help to provide the physical capacity to support new growth and improve the environment in our communities. Funding for programs and projects which are designed to facilitate the provision of affordable public transportation services and to make community facilities more accessible to persons with disabilities will assist those in need and make communities and individuals more self-reliant.

The Planning Environment - Opportunities and Challenges

The other main factor that the Department must consider in formulating its plan is the general environment in which the Department operates. For a department as diverse as SNSMR, this is difficult to portray in a few paragraphs, however, a discussion of the key opportunities and challenges confronting the Department should provide an idea of some of the contextual factors which influence the formulation of the upcoming year's Business Plan.

Budget Issues

First and foremost is the budget situation that SNSMR will experience for the foreseeable future. It is stating the obvious that it is going to be a challenging year. The Department's net budget for 2004-05 has been reduced compared to the previous year. This challenge will be met through the deferral of service enhancements the Department wishes to pursue on behalf of its clients. In addition, the Department raised fees for the upcoming year for most of its transactions, to reflect higher costs.

On the other hand, imbedded within this challenge, is an opportunity to leverage SNSMR's infrastructure as other departments will be looking for more efficient ways of delivering their own services. Our ability to seize these opportunities is tempered somewhat by the budget situation but SNSMR will still endeavour to deliver other departments' services on their behalf as has been done in the past with a number of licences and permits. Thus the financial situation will provide SNSMR with more leverage necessary to move it closer to being the one window service delivery arm of government.

Technology provides the Department with an even bigger lever to effectively and efficiently deliver services. SNSMR has many systems and processes that are the envy of other jurisdictions. The Department is truly leading edge in many of its applications. On the other hand, there are others that are outmoded for what the Department wants and needs to do. These applications must be replaced because they can no longer be properly maintained or enable SNSMR to find the program cost savings that will inevitably have to be found. With a continuing reality of scarce resources, the next steps to replace this technology will have to be carefully planned and executed.

Service Delivery

Serving SNSMR's customers in a convenient and efficient manner is a cornerstone of the Department's mandate. The recently released document *Citizens First 3* sponsored by the Institute for Citizen Centred Service and the Institute of Public Administration of Canada provides some interesting insights into service delivery. Although most of the survey data is reported at the national level, the results for

Nova Scotia tend to be quite similar to the Canadian experience. This report is a follow-up to similar

surveys conducted in 1998 and 2000.

The research indicates that improvements in service and service quality contribute to a more positive view of government in general. In other words the better government can serve its public, the more trust and confidence the public will have in its government. Therefore governments should do whatever they can to improve service quality as this will contribute to bolstering the legitimacy of government.

More specifically to what SNSMR can do to improve its own service delivery, the research indicates that the use of multiple channels are now the norm. In half of all attempts to obtain government services, Canadians use two or more channels. For example, a customer may start looking for service information on a website, follow up with a telephone inquiry and later visit an office in person.

Using the telephone and visiting an office still rate highest in terms of channels that clients use to access government services. Although not as common a form of access, internet usage is increasing year by year. This information creates increasingly complex challenges for the Department. It must, first, provide each channel of access for every one of its services to meet its customers demands. Second, the Department must provide consistent, seamless service across the different channels so that the user can receive similar service no matter which channel they choose.

While service quality ratings of satisfaction are rising for all levels of government - SNSMR's levels are very high - citizens also have increasing expectations of government. Sixty-two per cent of Atlantic Canadians (the highest rate in Canada) expect better service from governments than from the private sector. These expectations have been increasing since the beginning of the research in 1998. Again, this creates a challenge for the Department to meet increasing customer expectations for service, in light of government's current fiscal constraints.

In terms of the factors that improve client satisfaction, access is paramount. Access can mean many things including finding the right information about a program or service, the closest service location or the correct forms and instructions for completion. Approximately one-quarter of respondents to the survey indicated they could not readily access the services they needed. Office access tends to be the easiest while access by telephone appears to present the most issues. These findings present a dilemma for the Department in that it must balance the need to reduce expenditures while at the same time maintain the offices that so many of its clients want to use. In addition, the findings reinforce the view that managers must constantly adapt to the wishes of the consumer rather than allowing technical systems, rules or procedures to drive what the consumer must accept.

Lastly, once the client has accessed the service, five drivers of client satisfaction remain as the primary determinants of excellence. Timely service, knowledgeable and courteous staff who go the extra mile

to help clients, fair treatment and a successful outcome combine to create excellent service. These five

components of service delivery strongly influence client satisfaction and they are the most important factors from the customers perspective. Thus, both SNSMR's processes and the people who operate them must be constantly upgraded to meet the higher service standards expected by our clients.

Municipal Relations

Just as important to the Department's mandate as service delivery is the need to ensure that the Province's common interests with its municipal units are promoted. There are 55 municipal units in the province divided into one of three groups. There are 31 towns, 21 rural units (mainly county governments) and three regional municipalities such as the Cape Breton Regional Municipality.

The Department's municipal indicators project (www.gov.ns.ca/snsmr/muns/indicators/site) tracks performance across 41 measures in each of the 55 municipal units in the province. These indicators and others provide a rich source of data that provides the Department with an evidence based scorecard upon which it can develop its future initiatives in support of the municipal units.

The data indicates that some municipal units are worse off then others in financial terms. For example, the towns as a group have the lowest average household incomes of the three main categories of municipal units, the highest municipal expenditures per dwelling, the highest municipal tax burden and coincidentally the highest tax burden to household income ratio, versus the other two categories of units.

The indicator data also shows that about two-thirds of the provinces municipalities have lost population in 2001 versus four years previous. Excepting municipal units in and around the HRM, the trend in population growth, while somewhat mixed, is mainly downward. Moreover, of the 31 municipal units classified as towns, three quarters are losing population while about half of the rural municipalities have witnessed a population drop. If it is accepted that the loss of population, over a long period, makes it more difficult for a community to sustain its health and vibrancy, then measures must be taken to try to reverse these trends.

As with many other parts of Canada, the population of Nova Scotia is aging. The average age of all Nova Scotians has increased from almost 36 years of age to almost 38 years of age between 1991 and 2002. As Nova Scotians age, there will be a number of impacts on the services provided by government including the national pension system and health care. Municipal services will also be impacted. Added to this is the fact that Nova Scotia has the highest rate of disabled persons in Canada, with a rate of 20.1% of Nova Scotians identifying themselves as disabled. Most of the disabled are in the 65 and older age group. This will likely necessitate an increasing need for accessible facilities and public transportation by municipalities which may have to be supported by the Department.

This information is provided simply to indicate that governments at all levels have a number of

challenges that must be addressed through cooperation and innovation. Layered on top of these challenges is a federal government which wants to become more involved in municipal affairs, a constitutional responsibility normally assigned to the provinces. The Department must explore innovative means by which it can take advantage of the federal willingness to spend money in Nova Scotia's communities.

Human Resource Issues

Human resources are also critical to the Department meeting its mandate. The Department currently employs approximately 872 staff of which 99 are classified as managerial and the remainder are unionized employees. The Department regularly surveys its staff on a number of issues, the results of which are then tabulated by division, which allows each division to analyze its results and prepare appropriate responses to be implemented throughout the year. Overall, the results for 2003 were quite positive with over 79% of staff expressing satisfaction with their jobs at SNSMR, up by 2% over the results received in the 2001 survey.

Despite these positive results, the Department is facing a number of challenges in its capacity to build and maintain the workforce it requires. In the next five years it is estimated that approximately 309 or 40% of SNSMR's knowledgeable and experienced staff will be eligible to retire. The percentage eligible to retire at the managerial level is even higher at over 53 %. Even if only half these staff retire when eligible, this situation presents a formidable challenge for the Department in terms of succession planning and filling positions with the required expertise. The issue is particularly acute in the information technology area where the Department faces stiff competition for skilled and experienced knowledge workers.

There are a number of other human resource issues that SNSMR shares with other entities of the government. For example, the Department is thinly staffed in some key areas. SNSMR has many highly skilled people in its various positions, however, those skills must be continuously developed to match the evolving needs of the Department. And as witnessed in a number of cases, there is strong competition for certain skill sets needed in the Department. Innovative ways will have to be developed to find and hold the people the Department needs.

The transition in the workforce also provides an opportunity for the Department. Properly coordinated and thought out staff succession planning will allow the Department to develop the skill sets that will be needed to fulfill its mandate over the next decade and provide opportunities for employees within the Department.

Given all these opportunities and challenges, the general approach to be taken by the Department in the upcoming year is that it is time for a pause before SNSMR embarks on a new wave of innovation

and refresh. This year will mark a milestone for many major successes that were initiated just a few short years ago. The NSBR, Registry 2000, municipal equalization, Access Centres and the Native Fuel Point of Sale system are a few examples of major initiatives begun in the past few years that have either been fully implemented or are well underway.

A new cycle of initiatives is about to begin. The Department will take the upcoming year to identify new initiatives that should be undertaken and plan the necessary steps to move them forward. It is time for the Department and its staff to take a deep breath, find its bearings and then set out on another journey over the next three to four years. This revitalization is reflected in the initiatives that the Department has identified for action in the upcoming year.

Strategic Goals

Of the 13 major areas of responsibility of the Department, the following five strategic goals have been selected to promote government's priorities and to address some of the crucial opportunities and challenges outlined in the previous section of this Plan. Most of these goals are similar to those of last year with some refinements. The first goal has been added to reflect the financial realities of the present day. The other goals represent areas where the Department will dedicate additional effort over and above its current level of activity to fulfil major ongoing obligations. In particular, the Department will emphasize improvements to its services to business as it sets specific work priorities for 2004-05.

1. Become more efficient and cost-effective.

2. Improve accessibility and quality of government services.

3. Partner with municipalities to promote effective local government and healthy and vibrant communities.

4. Develop staff to meet current and future Departmental needs and provide a motivating work environment.

5. Modernise design of Departmental programs to support citizen-centred service models and to address emerging issues.

Core Business Areas

The Department's five core businesses are consistent with its five divisions with the exception of

administrative and support services that have been removed from the discussion of the core businesses. The Department is organized on a matrix basis, meaning that it is organized around the function being performed such as service delivery or program management rather than on a sectoral or client basis. The discussion below provides the major roles and functions (responsibilities) of each core business.

1. **Program Management and Corporate Services (PMCS)** - has responsibility for most of the programs offered by the Department. This includes strategic direction for the program, program development, enforcement and public awareness. The Division is also accountable for the related legislation, regulations and policies necessary for each program and for human resource support.

   Currently, major program areas and activities of this core business include the Provincial Tax Commission, the Registry of Motor Vehicles, Registry of Joint Stock Companies, Residential Tenancies, Corporate Collections, Consumer and Business Policy, Driver Safety, Corporate Development, and Audit and Enforcement in several program areas.

   Benefits of these programs include reduced deaths and injuries due to safer driving behaviour on provincial roads, a fairer and more efficient tax collection system, better consumer protection, more effective program management by the Department, improved compliance by business with licensing requirements, optimized revenue collection by the Department on behalf of government and other departments, and a healthier and safer workplace for Department employees.

   This core business supports the Department's Mission and Goals 1 and 5 by constantly improving the programs administered by SNSMR in a manner that is consistent with the public interest.

2. **Service Delivery** - is responsible for delivering the programs and services offered by the Department. Service Delivery provides the majority of the direct interaction with customers on behalf of the Department. It is also responsible for the Department Call Centre, Access Nova Scotia and Registry of Motor Vehicle offices across the province, along with managing the e-service channel. Major programs delivered by this core business include the Registry of Motor Vehicles, Residential Tenancies, Debtor Assistance and the Registry of Joint Stock Companies.

   Benefits of the core business include easier access to an ever expanding number of information and other services offered by the Department on behalf of government. This is accomplished through either electronic or physical means which provide more timely responses to service requests and better quality service in terms of accessability of the information required.

   This core business supports the Department's Mission and Goals 1 and 2 by constantly striving

to provide streamlined and easy access to quality, client-centred services.

3. **Registry and Information Management Services (RIMS)** - is responsible for registering and processing public records related to land, businesses and individuals. It is also responsible for the geographic information holdings of the Province and is the application and system owner of the Department's major databases.

   This division operates or provides operational support to a number of registries including the Registry of Deeds, Personal Property Registry, Vital Statistics, the Registry of Joint Stock Companies and the Nova Scotia Business Registry. It leads the Province's strategy for geographic information management including developing, maintaining and distributing Nova Scotia's primary geographic information. Other major back office activities include processing for a number of programs offered by the Department such as fuel, tobacco and vehicle dealer registrations as well as support to programs offered by other departments including *Wildlife Act* licensing programs on behalf of the Department of Natural Resources and registrations on behalf of the Workers Compensation Board.

   Benefits from the operation of this core business include improved efficiency in the provision of registration and processing functions on behalf of Departmental programs and external program owners, enhanced integrity and security around the information holdings of the Department, improved quality of the data contained in the holdings, easier access to that information and increased ability to share data with other government departments and agencies.

   This core business contributes to the Department's Mission and Goals 1, 2 and 5 by continuously improving the registries and information holdings that support internal and external client services offered by SNSMR and by improving the security around those holdings.

4. **Municipal Services** - provides planning and advisory services related to municipal matters to the government and on behalf of the government to municipalities. The core business also operates many of the grant and other financial support programs offered to municipalities.

   Programs within the Division include advice and support to municipalities in the areas of administration and finance and land use planning. The Division also administers programs such

   as the Canada-Nova Scotia Infrastructure Program, the Community Accessibility Program and the Community Transportation Assistance Program.

   Benefits derived from this business unit include municipalities that are more effective in their

governance role and their ability to provide services to citizens, that are more financially viable, and able to support development which will provide long term benefits to the entire province.

This core business supports the Department Mission and Goals 3 and 5 by continuously improving advice, programs and other forms of assistance to promote municipal interests so that they may operate in a more effective and efficient manner.

5. **Alternative Program Delivery (APD)** - is responsible for the development of partnerships to deliver services on behalf of other government departments and to manage arrangements with non-government agencies to deliver services on behalf of government. Opportunities for delivery of other government services by SNSMR include transferring certain licensing and permitting functions from the Departments of Environment and Labour and on-line licence renewals with two departments as well as partnerships with several municipalities.

   APD is examining, in consultation with municipalities, other delivery models for the provincial assessment program. Until a final decision is taken, the APD Division also delivers the Assessment Services program on behalf of the Department. Assessment Services is responsible for delivering an annual assessment roll to each of the 55 municipalities in compliance with the *Assessment Act.* The assessment roll is used by municipalities to generate revenue for services delivered by them, and the uniform assessment is used to calculate municipal contributions towards education, corrections and the distribution of provincial grants to municipalities. Legislation also requires assessment notices to be delivered annually to each property owner and to provide for an assessment appeal mechanism. The major activities in the assessment area include preparation of the annual assessment roll, a property inspection program, an appeal process, client relations and technology support.

   Benefits of alternate program delivery include better quality, cost effective services being delivered to Nova Scotians and a more effective and efficient use of public resources. The Assessment section provides municipalities with a reliable and stable basis to generate revenue to fund the services required by the citizens of municipal units.

   This core business contributes to the Department's Mission and Goals 1, 3 and 5 by continuously seeking alternate service delivery and infrastructure solutions that improve service and provide it in a more cost-effective manner. Producing the assessment roll is integral to the interests of municipalities and their financial health.

Priorities

As discussed in the Introduction, SNSMR is unique in the manner in which it delivers programs and services to customers. The Department is organized, for the most part, along functional lines meaning

that different divisions of SNSMR provide different functions or tasks related to the same program or service. This is quite different from most departments where one division, by and large, performs all the major activities related to a program from start to finish.

This is worth noting at this point because, different from most other departments, many of the priorities of SNSMR cannot be appropriately allocated to just one core business area, but rather span a number of units and divisions that all contribute their piece to the overall initiative. Thus the Department will not try to allocate priorities by core business area, unless it is clear that only one core business area performs an initiative on its own, such as most of the initiatives related to municipalities or assessment. In addition, due to the importance of human resources to the success of the Department, major initiatives related to that service are included in the SNSMR Business Plan along with some new measures to gauge performance that are presented at the end of this document.

Joint Priorities (PMCS, RIMS, APD and Service Delivery)

- Automate many back office functions currently conducted manually, over the medium term. While the Department's customers of its services can typically access most if not all of its services electronically, much of the back office work is still conducted manually. This initiative includes eliminating much of the paper involved in the processing, solving privacy and authenticity issues and automating mail-outs. During the upcoming year this project will be developed to determine where the barriers currently lie and to identify the opportunities for automation. This initiative will not only make processing faster but in the long term it will also reduce expenditures.

- Prioritize technology investments to closely align them with business goals and objectives and address specific business priorities. SNSMR currently uses a complex mix of old and new technical environments to deliver services to its clients. The Enterprise Architecture Project was initiated to document current business functions and the data, applications and technology used to develop a long range conceptual view of how those services may be delivered in the future and how to move from the current to the future environment. This Project will continue to prioritize these initiatives and implement them when ready, during the upcoming year.

- The Department relies on a variety of arrangements with the private sector to deliver its programs and services. As part of its ongoing management of these contract arrangements, the Department will explore opportunities to ensure the most efficient and cost-effective approaches are applied to deliver its programs and services.

- Continue to expand e-government services, approvals and payments across government. The Department has had some limited success in attracting e-government services and associated approvals and payments from across the Provincial Government. This effort will be expanded through several strategies in the upcoming year. In addition, the Department will enhance one-stop shopping services offered through the NSBR using newly negotiated agreements with other levels of government to make access as convenient for the customer as possible.

- Accelerate migration of land parcels to the Registry 2000. The Department will be required to maintain two land registries for the foreseeable future - one name based and the other parcel driven - until all those parcels that are currently name based have been migrated to the new land registration system. In order to accelerate the migration of the remaining paper based land parcels to the new land registration system, a plan must be developed to induce property owners to transfer their properties to the new system faster than they otherwise would based on current triggers. Options will be developed during 2004-05 to determine how this acceleration may occur. This initiative, if successful, will save the Department considerable funding in the longer term if it is able to terminate the name based system earlier than contemplated.

- Make more of the services offered by the Department available on-line. Each item identified for future on-line service must go through various stages of evaluation, design and development before it can be implemented. Due to the volume of services and the limited resources that can be allocated to this process, only a few services per year can be enhanced. The projects slated for implementation in 2004-05 include the Geo Portal used to access geographic information held by governments, personalized vehicle plates and the lien check service for those purchasing personal property such as automobiles.

- Modernise the *Companies Act*. Several steps must be taken to ensure that the modernisation is thorough and correct including a study of the current legislation, preparation of a discussion paper with proposed amendments, stakeholder review of the proposals and then technical modifications to the registration process to facilitate the required amendments to the legislation.

Municipal Services

- Initiate joint ventures with municipalities with the aim of enhancing the provision of e-government mechanisms to access government services. These joint ventures will be leveraged by accessing provincial investments for use by the municipalities. In the upcoming year, the

Department will work with a municipal committee to develop innovative means by which provincial funding can be accessed by the municipalities, enhance relationships with the appropriate municipal officials to implement this initiative and identify opportunities for joint ventures. A report with recommendations for proceeding with this initiative will be completed during 2004-05.

- Conduct, in consultation with the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities (UNSM), a cost benefit analysis to determine the potential of using provincial/municipal tax exempt bonds as a means of raising capital for future municipal infrastructure improvements.

- Explore an information management system for use by municipalities to better manage their own infrastructure needs. This work will include issuing an Request For Proposals (RFP) for the development of the system, examining the systems used in other jurisdictions such as Alberta and securing funding for the system.

- Evaluate various municipal grant programs offered by the Department to determine whether these programs are meeting the intended objectives.

- Urge the federal government to partner with the Province and its municipalities on a new multi-year infrastructure program. This initiative would be structured in a similar manner to the Canada - Nova Scotia Infrastructure Agreement with cost sharing for the program from all three levels of government. Part of the new agreement would include financial assistance for recreational facilities, green ways and hiking and biking trails.

- Continue to fund rural transportation programs to improve access for seniors, persons with disabilities and disadvantaged Nova Scotians, particularly the Community Transportation Assistance Program (CTAP), Accessible Transportation Assistance Program (ATAP), and Motor Vehicle licence plate and registration fee reimbursement program.

- Increase awareness of the municipal drinking water supply protection program, provide advice and assistance related to planning for water supply areas and support the implementation of the Provincial Drinking Water Strategy.

Assessment

- Protect homeowners from sudden and dramatic increases in property assessments by working with the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities (UNSM) to establish a limit on yearly increases in cases where there has been little or no physical change to the property.

Human Resources

- Establish development plans as part of performance management plans for all staff. This development plan will include a number of facets such as a skills inventory, an assessment of the skills needed by the Department to meet future operational requirements, individual training requirements and individual development plans to meet the requirements.

- Create a succession management plan for the Department. Key positions will be identified as well as upcoming retirements. Using the skills inventory and needs analysis outlined in the priority above, competencies required in the key positions and the availability of these competencies in current staff will be assessed. At least two successors to each key position will be identified, development plans for these potential successors will be created and strategies for the appropriate knowledge transfer will be established. These tasks will be completed in the upcoming fiscal year.

Budget Context

SNSMR - Estimated Budget Expenditures			
	2003/04 Estimate (Per 2003\04 Estimates Book)	2003/04 Forecast (Per 2004\05 Estimates Book)	2004/05 Budget (Per 2004\05 Estimates Book)
	$ Thousands	$ Thousands	$ Thousands
Total Program Expenses - Gross Current	129,543.0	124,597.0	132,114.0
Net Program Expenses - Net of Recoveries	93,161.0	89,844.0	92,352.0
TCA Cash Flow	750.0	750.0	1,304.5
Salaries & Benefits	44,552.0	42,542.0	42,024.0
Funded Staff (FTEs) - Gross	933.4	870.7	885.2
Funded Staff (FTEs) - Net	772.4	712.1	722.8

Performance Measures

The Department presents the items it expects to achieve over the medium term in two ways, a narrative outline of its priorities (discussed in some detail on pages 16 to 19) and a quantitative representation of its desired results using performance measures. These measures are presented in the tables that follow.

The Department attempts to quantify as many of its program objectives and operational procedures as it can. It is often clearer and easier for the user to gauge progress when various mileposts are quantified. Some of the array of measures monitored by the Department are reported in documents such as this Plan, others are kept for internal management purposes only.

The following templates provide the major outcomes, measures, data, targets and strategies for each of the core business areas that will be monitored by the Department during fiscal year 2004-05. Most of the outcomes, measures, etc. are the same as those included in the 2003-04 Business Plan. However, as the measurement process continues to evolve, new measures have been added and others have been refined. This refinement will no doubt continue in the future. Data is provided for the years 2001-02 (the base year) onwards in most cases and targets are as of 2004-05, unless stated otherwise.

Business Planning Template - Fiscal Year 2004-05					
Core Business - Program Management and Corporate Services					
Outcomes	**Measures**	**Data**		**Target 2004/05**	**Strategies to Achieve Target**
		01-02	**02-03**		
Optimize revenues collected by the Department on its own behalf, the Province, and client departments	- actual debt collection revenues as a percent of estimates	- 130%	108%	- 100% (adjusted for changes to forecast due to changing economic conditions)	- Ensure that resources are balanced to meet recovery opportunities, develop staff and update client departments on debt collection activities.
	- actual tobacco tax revenues as a percent of estimates	- 99.9	100%	- $\geq$ 100% (estimates will be adjusted to reflect volume sales and tax levels)	- Closely monitor tobacco tax revenues and manufacturers shipments, review the tobacco retail compliance program for adequate coverage and participate in national coordination activities.
Improve the program standards (in the functions of policy development, program administration and public awareness) in the program areas of: - consumer protection - landlord/tenant relations - driver safety - fuel and tobacco tax and, - business registration and licensing .	- ratio of non-adjudicated to adjudicated cases[1] in residential tenancies	- N/A	1:3.7	- 10% increase in ratio	- Ensure that the appropriate roles and responsibilities for each program area are properly allocated across divisions and that coordination mechanisms are in place to provide for effective program delivery. - Update, enhance and clarify provisions through legislative amendments in several program areas. - Improve the: information to stakeholder groups; program management systems and processes; and, program expertise of program management personnel, in a number of program areas.
	- violations by regulated businesses as a percentage of inspections conducted	- N/A	10%	- will increase initially but is expected to decline through time	

[1] Non-adjudicated cases are defined as withdrawn applications and mediated agreements and adjudicated cases are defined as resulting in Director's orders.

Note: several measures related to road safety have been transferred to the Department of Transporattion and Public Works along with responsibility for this item.

Business Planning Template - Fiscal Year 2004-05					
Core Business - Program Management and Corporate Services - Cont.					
Outcomes	**Measures**	**Data**		**Target 2004/05**	**Strategies to Achieve Target**
		01-02	**02-03**		
Improve the level of compliance in the areas of the fuel and tobacco tax, driver and vehicle safety and business practices.	- number of audits/inspections resulting in unpaid tax or other actions[2]	- 141 (2000-01)	260	- increase by 10%	- Develop systems to identify/select higher risk vendors/ clients for audit/inspection and to facilitate the effective and efficient allocation of staff resources. - Provide training to audit staff through the Canadian Fuel Tax Council Training Sub-Project. Continue cross-training of staff in areas of business licensing, IFTA, fuel and tobacco audits and compliance inspections. - Conduct a review of in-office audit procedures and programs to ensure audit resources are effectively deployed. - Increase the number of inspections and audits conducted by the Department or assist policing partners in enforcement efforts and promote improved enforcement efforts. - Work with various partners to monitor national activities, coordinate initiatives and to monitor illegal activities.
	- number of business licensing inspections and audits	- 25	32	- 35	

[2] Actions defined as tax assessments or compliance actions.

Business Planning Template - Fiscal Year 2004-05					
Core Business - Registry and Information Management Services					
Outcomes	**Measures**	**Data**		**Target 2004/05**	**Strategies to Achieve Target**
		01-02	**02-03**		
Improve the quality, security and accessability of property registration services.	- % of land parcels converted to new land tenure system	- 0%	0%	10%	- Develop and implement strategy to accelerate migration of land parcels into new land registration system.
Improve the quality, security and accessability of business licencing and registration services.	- % of business clients who can complete all necessary licencing requirements through the NSBR	- 30%	32%	80%	- Expand use of NSBR infrastructure. - End-to-end electronic registration automate back office functions to decrease processing time and reduce costs.
Improve the quality, security and accessability of vital statistics information and services.	- % compliance with national standards for Vital Statistics security	- TBD	N/A	100%	- Participate in development of National Standards for Vital Statistics Security. - Negotiate MOU with Passport Office for electronic verification of birth certificates presented for Canadian passports.
Improve the quality and accessability of provincial geographic information.	- % of geographic information data sets accessible from a desktop computer	- TBD	N/A	80% government users 100% of all users by 2008	- Continue implementation of GeoNOVA Strategy: • develop maintenance strategies in consultation with the geomatics community, with a focus on municipal mapping requirements. • build business relationships for geographic data sharing and exchange • implement GeoNOVA portal

Business Planning Template - Fiscal Year 2004-05					
Core Business - Alternative Program Delivery					
Outcomes	**Measure**	**Data 01-02**	**Data 02-03**	**Target 2004/05**	**Strategies to Achieve Target**
To participate in the development of strategies, approaches, methodologies and other tools to support (1) One-stop shopping, (2) Electronic Service Delivery and (3) Shared Service Delivery.	- % of Divisional Level of Effort/Resources devoted towards developing strategies, approaches, methodologies and tools.	- 20%	25%	- below 30%	- To provide support to departmental initiatives as project coordinators, project managers or project team members as appropriate.
To develop and expand our network of organizations, and contacts within these organizations, for the purpose of developing Integrated and/or Shared Service Delivery (I/SSD) partnerships with SNSMR.	- # of new opportunities identified for I/SSD consideration.	- 4	3	- 5 - 10	- Generate interest in and identify new opportunities for I/SSD.
	- # of new Project Charters or MOUs, formal and informal, entered into to evaluate I/SSD opportunities.	- 4	- 4	- 1 - 3	- Proficiently evaluate I/SSD opportunities to determine if a new or expanded partnership is possible.
To implement and maintain positive partnerships with organizations that have already entered into Integrated and/or Shared Service Delivery (I/SSD) partnerships with SNSMR.	- # of SLAs entered into between SNSMR and partner organizations	- 0	2	- 2 - 4	- Implement new I/SSD partnerships and expand existing partnerships. - Monitor existing partnerships to (1) ensure that the arrangement are operating as intended and (2) to identify opportunities to improve partnerships.
	- # of new service offerings using SNSMR channels and/or infrastructure	- 0	4	- 5 - 10	
	- # of Partnership reviews conducted.	- 0	2	- 2 - 3	
To address corporate and departmental issues/initiatives, as assigned, on behalf of the Deputy and senior management team.	- % of divisional level of effort/resources devoted towards corporate and/or departmental issues and initiatives	- 15%	- 20%	- below 40%	- Provide project management, research and development to a focused portfolio of special projects and initiatives. - Manage the overall portfolio of initiatives within the Division to ensure staff resources remain focused on advancing the I/SSD mandate.

Business Planning Template - Fiscal Year 2004-05				
Core Business: Alternative Program Delivery - Assessment Services				
Outcomes	**Measures**	**Data** 01 / 02	**Target 2004/05**	**Strategies to Achieve Target**
Increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the assessment roll	- % of assessment value to property sale	- 97% residential 98% -100% commercial 100%	95-105% assessment to sale	- Continue with IT strategy by expanding the web based technology, implementation of components of new commercial valuation technology & continuing with a 3 year refresh strategy.
Increase recognition as a leader of property assessment in Canada	- % of assessment lost through appeal	- 0.25% / 0.2%	less than 2% loss of assessment value	- Improve the valuation standard by conducting inspection programs, implementing & evaluating a pilot project using multiple regression analysis and developing & implementing an internal audit for key valuation functions.
	- appeals as a total % total assessment	- 2.2% / 1.96%	maintain or reduce the number from current levels	
Increase client confidence with assessment products and services	- % of clients satisfied with services			- Implement a HR strategy that addresses the educational & training requirements, responds to the anticipated staffing retirements by developing a succession management program and reviewing on updating training programs & professional requirements for assessors.
	- property owners	- 64% / 72.6%	75% - property owners	
	- municipal units	- TBD / N/A	65% - municipal units	
				- Continue with a communications strategy by giving property owners & municipal units easier access to assessment data, evaluating service levels of property owners & municipal units and by reviewing & updating the requirements for inquiry management.
				- Continue with a public relations strategy by networking with other assessment jurisdictions, participation in national & international conferences, bench marking & evaluating service levels with municipal clients.

Business Planning Template - Fiscal Year 2004-05					
Core Business - Service Delivery					
Outcomes	**Measures**	**Data**		**Target 2004/05**	**Strategies to Achieve Target**
		01-02	**02-03**		
Achievement of customer service standards at Access and Call Centres.	- % of in-person customers served within 10 minutes	- 50%	74%	- 80%	- Forecast and monitor customer demand and deploy staff to appropriately address demand while continuing to balance with other operational priorities, such as cash and inventory balancing, compliance with procedure, security of bank deposits, training etc.
	- % of telephone customer calls answered within 20 seconds	- 80%	87%	- 80%	
	- % of driver road test appointments scheduled within five weeks of request	- 90	99.3%	- 100%	
	- % of residential tenancy hearings scheduled within four weeks of request	- 90%	89%	- 100%	
Improved delivery of services to business and individual customers	- % of customers satisfied with services received through SNSMR sites	- 89%	92%	- 90%	- Identify transactions and services feasible for electronic service delivery and develop and implement appropriate online transactions. Focus initially on highest volume transactions with lowest complexity for developing into electronic applications. - Complete an inventory of all current services available to business customers, analyze those services to determine which are feasible for delivery through each of the service channels. Define which services can be offered through each channel and package services together where feasible.
	- number of new electronic service transactions implemented annually	- 4	4	- 4	
	- % of business clients satisfied with service	- 84%	84%	- 85%	

Business Planning Template - Fiscal Year 2004-05					
Core Business: Municipal Services					
Outcomes	**Measures**	**Data**		**Target 2004/05**	**Strategies to Achieve Target**
		01-02	**02-03**		
Partner with municipalities to promote effective local government and healthy and vibrant communities	- % of municipalities using Municipal Indicators Initiative to improve performance	- TBD	TBD	- 10% of municipalities sharing best practices	- Refine municipal indicators program, monitor results and assist municipalities to reach satisfactory performance level - Review legislative requirements of municipalities - Survey participants attending information sessions and workshops to ensure that the product provided promotes effective local government - Enhance working relationship between SNSMR and municipalities to ensure best possible 2 way information flow - Establish baseline data on what partnerships are currently in pace and ensure they have the tools to take advantage of partnership opportunities; enhance e-government joint ventures through partnerships - Evaluate municipal grants programs with established metrics - Create program to help municipalities manage their infrastructure needs - Implement community based inclusive transportation systems. Identify opportunities for additional community based transportation service in Nova Scotia - Provide funding and assistance to community-based organizations to encourage the development and growth of sustainable transportation in rural Nova Scotia - Provide programs that will assist municipalities in protecting drinking water such as funding assistance for planning - Continue to place a priority on improving municipal water systems through infrastructure program
	- number of intermunicipal partnerships	- N/A	18	- 25	
	- % of municipal units in which e - government framework established	- 10%	30%	- 100%	
	- # of counties served by inclusive transportation	- 5	7	- 9	
	- % of Canada/Nova Scotia infrastructure Program funding committed to approved projects	- 0 %	75.5%	- 100% of funding committed	
	- number of municipalities with bylaws that protect drinking water supplies	- 25	29	- 35	

Business Planning Template - Fiscal Year 2004-05					
Human Resource Initiatives					
Outcomes	**Measures**	**Data**		**Target 2004/05**	**Strategies to Achieve Target**
		01-02	**02-03**		
Staff are developed to meet current and future department needs and provided with a motivating work environment.	- % of performance appraisals completed by Management Compensation Plan (MCP) employees	- 100	100	- maintain at 100%	- tie operational performance and business planning results to merit pay
	- staff satisfaction with working in SNSMR	- 77%	79%	- 80 % satisfaction	- review survey results by division and develop action plans to address any outstanding issues